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HIS OWN ENEMY

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

By

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**Characters:**

**Jules Winslow**

**Frank Winslow**

**Aline**

**Grace Garrison**

**Joyce**

**Kate**

**Dr Bentley**

**Miss Richter**

Act 1.

Scene: Library in Winslow's home in New York.

Enter Jules Winslow.

Jules

picks up news papers, takes out watch and looks at it, I've got twenty minutes till he gets back. Sits down in large arm chair, begins to read; reads a few moments, then looks up, It's so nice here; I am beginning to think I am in the wrong house. It's too good to be true; but I'm going to enjoy it as long as it lasts. Reads again a few moments.

A short pause.

Enter Aline Winslow, in ugly mood. She throws down her muff; pulls gloves off in a hurry, finds hatpins in hat and pulls them out as if they were at fault, She is walking up and down the room in a temper.

Jules

turns, looks at her, sarcastically, I'm in the right house. He continues watching her. She takes off her hat and ~~jabs~~ jabs pins viciously in hat, then throws it on a chair. What's wrong, Aline, been in disagreeable company?

Aline

looks at him, Well, I should say so. I've been a target for two hours to a person I detest more than I do Grace Garrison.

Jules

whistles, That sounds as if you had paid a visit to the devil.

Aline

puts her handkerchief to her mouth, There is'nt much difference between a dentist and the devil.

Jules

laughs, What a reward for the poor dentist.

Aline

Poor dentist did you say? You just try it. You will go to him, feeling sure you have two small cavities to be filled; and when he is through looking in your mouth you'll find you've got twenty two cavities, and he'll tell you it is a shame to allow your beautiful teeth to go into decay for a few paltry dollars. He says nothing of the pain; that you find out later. She again puts handkerchief to her mouth.

Jules sits looking at her a few moments, as she walks up and down apparently in pain.

Jules

If I'm not mistaken you told Frank you enjoy your visits to the dentist. You said he is such a delightful fellow, and so attentive to you.

Aline

angrily, Of course I say that to him. He's attentive enough to Grace Garrison, is'nt he?

Jules,

laughs, Well, that's the limit. He laughs again.

Aline

holding handkerchief to cheek, If you had the pain I have just now you would'nt laugh.

Enter Frank, while she is still walking up and down as in great pain. She does not see him enter, but Jules does.

Jules

to Frank, You're back sooner than I expected.

Aline turns and sees Frank; she immediately assumes a different attitude.



~~Frank~~  
A Frank

to Jules. Didn't see the party; just my luck. to Aline, Have you been out for a walk? The weather is fine.

Aline

Yes, I have been out, but not for a walk; I've been to the dentist's and spent two delightful hours with him. He's such a charming man. Jules turns around so that he can laugh unnoticed by Frank.

Aline is in pain, but tries to hide it.

Frank

Well you are the first woman I ever saw who enjoys the dentist's chair.

Aline

Don't you worry about that; he wouldn't hurt me if I asked him to. He's just as kind and considerate as he can be. She turns to press handkerchief to her cheek. Jules has all he can do to keep from laughing out loud.

Frank

I wonder if his bill will be as considerate.

Aline

turns sharply. Oh, you needn't worry about that. You wouldn't care if he pulled every tooth in my mouth as long as ~~the~~ it didn't cost you any thing; as for the bill, you can lay your worry aside, for he won't send any. He told me so.

Jules

aside, This is getting too warm for a third party. He turns and leaves.

Frank

Surprised, Aline, that doesn't sound well; it isn't a bit like you?

Aline

Does it sound well, for a husband to say, "Grace, I stick to you in spite of the whole world."?

Frank

surprised, Who told you that?

~~Aline~~  
Aline

You did. You said it in your sleep. Now if you weren't thinking of her you wouldn't dream of her.

Frank

in a predicament. Aline you must trust me, I give you my word of honor that you have nothing to reproach me with.

Aline

But you visit her don't you?

Frank

again surprised. Who told you that?

Aline

Never mind who told me. I know it, that's sufficient.

Frank

Yes, I do visit her, but for no other reason than to be the friend she needs just now.

Aline

Indeed, if she needs a friend why doesn't she confide in me?

Frank

She'd be more than willing to to gain your confidence, but she dare not ask you.

Aline

Of course not, she knows better than to ask a respectable woman to associate with her.

Frank

Perhaps if a <sup>respectable</sup> respectable woman were to give her the chance, she would be respectable too.

Now Frank

Aline

Now Frank, please don't try to blind me. I'm not a baby. I knew from the first minute we met her in Saratoga she was setting her cap for you.

Frank *flirtation*

In Saratoga it was simply a foolish flirtation, the same as hundreds of others are in these places.

Aline

But it is serious now.

Frank

Firmly, No, and you <sup>path</sup> know it is not? I am trying to help this poor girl to the right path. No one else will do it. He goes over to her and puts his arm around her waist. Come now, dear, be the sensible girl you always were. Stop and think. Does my affection for you seem any less since we met Grace Garrison.

Aline

No, but you are not at home as much as you were before then.

Frank

I admit that, and I can only say that the time I spend away from home I shall never be afraid to reflect upon. Aline, you must trust me. I can't tell you everything I should like to just now. If there were less gossipers in respectable society, you would have been spared all this unnecessary suspicion.

Aline

Now, you just ~~think~~ think this over and see whether I have no right to be suspicious.

Frank

If you trust me as you should, you have no right.

Aline

Would you trust me to that extent?

Frank

Yes, indeed I would. Where there is love there is trust. He <sup>presses</sup> kisses her on lips.

Aline

cries out, Oh, Frank, you have hurt my newly-filled tooth. he looks at her as she puts handkerchief to her mouth. I'll have to give up that dentist; I think he is causing me unnecessary pain. Its simply awful the way I suffer.

Frank

sarcastically, yes, I would give him up if I were you. Why don't you try Dr. Robinson?

Aline

I think I will.

Telephone rings. Frank takes up receiver.

Frank

Hello.)- Yes.- You don't say.) Well, I'd rather not; really I don't know.- Well, I suppose ~~me~~ I will have to.- I'll prepare you for that.- Alright.- Good-bye. He hangs up receiver. Will's got into some trouble again. (He hangs up receiver) He wants some advice.

Aline

Its too bad you didn't take up the ministry; only I shouldn't care to be a minister's wife.

Frank

Well, that would make all the difference in the world. He goes to door. I won't be gone long. Tell Jules to wait a few minutes for me; I want to see him. He leaves.

Aline

stops and thinks, Perhaps Anna is wrong. He is as considerate as ever was, and really, I think he is more so now than before. Perhaps that is because he sees the difference between a good woman and a bad one, a pause. Then as if she came to a sudden conclusion, I will trust him in spite of Anna's warnings. Maid enters, hands Aline a card. She reads, "Grace Garrison" She stands looking surprised, stops a moment in undecided manner then says, show ~~her~~ the lady in.

Maid leaves.

Aline

When the spider wants his fly, he invites him into his parlor. Enter Grace Garrison, rather flashily attired? She is a tall, stately girl, about twenty-five years old.

about twenty-five years old.

Aline  
goes over to meet her. I am glad to meet you Miss Garrison.

Grace looks at her searchingly, trying to read her thoughts.

Grace

You know right well you'r not glad to meet me. You are simply anxious to know what I came for. She turns and looks at a chair. I suppose I may sit down? She does so before Aline can answer/

Aline

I confess I am curious to know the meaning of your visit here/

Grace

Yes, and your in a hu ry to know, so you can ship me out before any of your dear respected friends m et such an aufu' person as I am, in your house. As Aline about to speak Grace puts up her hand. Tut, tut? don't make any opologies; I know you won't mean a word of it, and now I'll begin. She looks Aline direc tly in the eye, and in a slow firm tone says, Mrs. Winslow, I love your husband.

Aline

in shocked, reprimanding tone, You dare-----.

Grace

still sitting on chair with her arms resting on back of chair near. Now, take my advise, don't lose your head, and you won't lose your husband. As I said before, I love him, and love means sacrifice. That's what brought me here. I came to tell you he is yours, all yours. I did my best to take him from you. I enticed him to my home; but there to my great surprise I found it was not my heart he wanted but my soul. "I know there is the mak ng of a good woman in you", he said, "Will you let me help you?"--- I accepted his offer; first, because I wanted to be near him, second, I was glad to get the chance, which suchmen as your brother-in-law, and such women as you deny me.

Aline

Women who wish to be good need no one to help them.

Grace

No, not when they are brought up in a respectable atmosphere and placed at the beginning of a straight, smooth, easy road; but how about such girls as I, brought up in the slums with nothing but temptation around her, and vice to lead her to a road, crooked at every step, and between each step a pool of filth, a swamp of mud. No sooner do we release one foot from the pool when the other falls into the next.

Aline

But why should a girl begin to live in the slums?

Grace

Because her mother is there. But that does not say the girl is happy in the same life her mother leads; but there's no other way. A girl with the stamp of the slums upon her is nobetter in the eyes of the respectable world than one afflicted with leprosy.-- But this is not what I came to tell you. Mrs Winslow, your husband loves you, but he is far from happy, for you are a cold, indifferent wife, and he is nothing but a grown up boy, who wants to be fondled and kissed. Starvation oft times makes love grow cold. Take my advice: feed him, he is hungry.-- She rises-- I must be going. I don't want to meet Frank. I saw him leave the house just before I came in, and he may return soon. I want you to promise me never to tell him I was here.

Aline

But why?

Grace

For reasons I can't explain to you just now. You have nothing to fear. Your husband is just as safe now as he was before I met him. I know

that unless + give him up ruin and disgrace will be his reward for all he has done for me. She heaves a deep sigh. That must never be I want to see him rise, rise to the height of my ambition.--Come now, I must be off; promise me you wo'nt tell him.

Enter Jules; looks sharply at Grace.

Jules  
to Aline, I didn't know you had a visitor.

Aline  
You have met Miss Garrison, have'nt you?

Jules *in a joking way*  
sarcastically, Yes, I have had that great pleasure, but didn't expect to meet her here in our home.

Grace stands leaning on her parasol, looks at Jules in critical manner showing plainly she understands the insult.

Grace  
in sarcastic tone, How fortunate you are, Mrs Winslow, to have such a considerate brother-in-law.

Jules  
I should like to be able to say: How considerate of Miss Garrison to refuse the hospitality of Mrs Winslow.

Aline  
shocked, Jules.

Grace  
to Aline, You understand now why women like I are forced to go back.

Jules  
Where they belong.

Aline  
Jules, this is my home.

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Jules  
Aline, she has taken you in the same as she did your husband; but I'll not stand by and close my eyes. He turns to Grace. Miss Garrison, I forbid you to enter that door again. Aline is horrified.

Grace  
in bitter tones, Mr Winslow, I know you think you are doing right; but I hope you will live long enough to learn you have done wrong. to Mrs W. Good day, Mrs Winslow. She leaves.

Aline  
Jules, you are killing us both with kindness, and I wo'nt stand for it.

Jules  
You will thank me when I am through with her. You do'nt know these women and their ways. Why, there is'nt one among the lot of them that wants to be good. They will make you believe the moon is made of cheese and you'll believe it, because they know how to deceive you.

Aline  
But I tell you this girl is an exception to your rule. If you were here and heard speak you would act differently toward her. I tell you, I pity her.

Jules  
in a rage, So, she has succeeded in winning you over, has she? You little goose, can't you see through her game? She is using you as a tool.

Enter Frank.

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Frank  
What's the matter here? Are you two quarrelling?

Jules looks at Frank sharply, then turns to Aline.



Jules

Aline, will you leave us for a few moments?

Aline

goes to the door. Call me as soon as you have finished arguing. I have something to say to you, Frank. She leaves.

Frank

in anxious tone, What were you two quarrelling about?

Jules

Not very much; in fact nothing. Didn't you meet your friend Miss Garrison? She just left as you came in.

Frank

surprised, Grace here?

Jules

Yes; but one thing is certain, she will never call again.

Frank

Jules, did you insult that poor girl in my home?

Jules

Insults to such women are like water on a duck's back.

Frank

What do you know of this girl? that gives you the right to condemn her?

Jules

Do'nt forget, Frank, I have been through the school which I will not permit you to graduate from. I watched her closely in Saratoga. You remember my warning you against her, and you admitted she was a desperate flirt. I tried to keep Aline in ignorance, but you went so far that even she began to notice and insisted on returning home. My sudden call to Europe gave you a free field. I asked Aline in every letter to confide in me; but I never learned the truth until I returned a month ago. Aline's restlessness, your so-called frequent visits to the Al-

to the club furnished me with full details of the case. I began to watch you, and now, MR Winslow, try to deny that Miss Garrison is not your mistress.

Frank startles as if shot; he is lost for words, then slowly regains his composure.

Frank

Jules, you are working up a case on circumstantial evidence, and that has very often failed. It is true I see the girl pretty often in her home but for noother reason than to help her gain a foothold in a respectable carreer.

Jules

Indeed? And who is this girl that you should sacrifice your wife and children, your whole future?

Frank

She is God's child, the same as you and I and our children. You once had a child of your own; suppose----

Jules

Do'nt dare class your children and my little girl with her. If I had the chance to see my child alive but knew she would act as Grace Garrison did at Saratoga I would prefer to know she is dead. How can you make me believe a woman like her wants to be good? He goes over to Frank, and pats him on the shoulder. Come, now, my boy, it's not too late to save you. I can't and I wo'nt permit you to ruin your whole future for that miserable creature.

Frank does not know what to do ar say. Jules sees he is in doubt.

Jules

Promise me you will never see her again.

Frank

hoping to close the argument, falters a moment. Yes.

Jules

I hope you will keep your word.

Frank

I said I promise . He turns to door.

Jules

Just a moment, Frank. Frank turns but does not look at him. Frank.  
you do'nt intend to keep that promise. I can read it in your eyes.

Frank

takes a few steps nearer to him, I can't, I wo'nt give up this girl  
till I can prove to you that you are wrong.

Jules

in hot anger. So, it has gone that far, has it? The trap she set for  
you has worke d so we'll you can' get out without assistance? Well, I  
will open that trap door and set you free before you'll have time to  
think it over. I will prove to you you have been nothing but a con-  
venient provider of money for her; and these women will sell them-  
selves to highest bidder.

Frank

beginning to see the horror of it all. What do you mean?

Jules

I mean to buy you out. She no doubt knows you are not much more than  
an employee of mine; I can sign bigger checks than you.  
Frank is so horrified at this he can hardly master his feelings.

Frank

You will notm you dare not do this; you'll regret it as long as you  
live. I'll never, never forgive you. I will forget you raised me from  
childhood.

Jules

Yes, I raised you from childhood, and that is why I must save you, if  
ruin comes to you, it also comes to me. Now, my boy, tell me the truth

Will you give her up?

Frank

Sadly, yes, I will give her up.

Jules

You said that once before .

Frank

I give you my word of honor I will give her up on one cindition,  
and that is---- .

Jules

That I do not go to her? You are jealous; well, God knows I ~~don't~~ even  
want to see her if I can help it; but if I can't succeed in keeping  
you from her I know I will have no trouble in Buying her.

Frank

I say again. I give you my word of honor I will give her up.  
He offers Jules his hand; he takes it.

Jules

You are taking a bitter dose, but you will find it is ac curein the  
end. He releases Frank's hand. You may call Aline Now; she's no d  
doubt waiting. He walks out slowly.

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Frank

Walks around the room like mad. Great God, what am I to do? I can  
manage this no longer; I need some help. I must trust Aline. She will  
be shocked, I know, but it can't be helped, it can't be helped. She  
must find it out sooner or later. Enter Aline; sees Frank walking  
about in distracted manner.

Aline

Jules told me you have both come to a satisfactory conclusion; but if  
I should judge from appearances-- .

Frank

goes over to her, his excitement showing in his manner. Aline I am compelled to open the grave to a family secret; but can't be helped. Circumstances demand it.

Aline

You look so nervous, you frighten me.

Frank

Listen, dear, listen. You have always thought Jules to be a bachelor. Well, he is not. He's had a wife, and he has a child.

Aline

shocked. Are you sure you know what you are talking about?

Frank

Yes, yes, I know, and you shall know presently. He married a woman knowing she was not all a good woman should be; but he loved her and a all warning was useless. After six years of married life he divorced her on the grounds of her infatuation for a common coachman. The Law gave him the child; but she stole her from him, and though he spent half his fortune searching for her he never found her.)) We were all confident that the mother gave the child a decent bringing up, for she loved her well enough to risk stealing her from Jules; but we were mistaken. Clair was clever enough to trick Jules into marrying her; but we never knew she was nothing more than a woman of the slums and when she gained her freedom she went back to her people and took the child with her.

Aline

I see, I see it all; Grace is his child.

Frank

Yes.

Aline

Oh, how dreadful, how dreadful.

They stand looking at each other. A pause.

Aline

But tell me Frank, if you knew who she was, why did you permit her to act so at Saratoga?

Frank

Would to God I knew who she was at that time. Jules would never have seen her at her worst. I should have succeeded in getting her to leave that place with the promise of getting her elsewhere; but I did not know until I called at her home. There I saw her mother's picture and a Fairy Tale book she had with her when she was kidnapped. I began to question her. She told me all; but she did not seem to know that her real name was Edith Winslow. She remembers her pet-name was Topsey.

Aline

I understand now why you befriended her.

Frank

Yes, I've done all in my power to help her prove herself worthy of the position she was to fill, and my plan met with success while lasted; for although she had a horrible bringing up, she has Jules' blood coursing through her veins.

Aline

But how is it she did not suspect anything when you were so kind to her

Frank

I told her I could plainly see there was the making of a good woman in her; and if she would accept the chance I was ready to help her. You know, dear, there are a few men who would do this, but they are too

you few. If I had known he had watched her so closely at Saratoga I would have known my plan was in vain,)-- now, Aline, can you help me, can you suggest something?

Aline

There is but one thing, and that is -tell him the truth.

Frank

To tell him the truth would be to kill him; for he would kill himself.

A line

We are placed in a dreadful position; for everything seems against us. But there must be some outlet. We must think and think, we can't decide this matter on the spur of the moment. Jules is going to the club to-night, and we will think till we find a way to save them both.

Enter maid,

Maid

The seamstress wishes to see you, Mrs. Winslow/

Aline I'll

I'll be with her in a few minutes. Maid leaves,

Aline

Now, Frank, take my advice; brush up, don't allow Jules to see you like this. Two heads are wiser than one, and then we are sure to find a way before the night is over. She creeps into his arms and kisses him

Frank

surprised, So, little wifey, you can be affectionate, but only when there is trouble.

Aline

It isn't because I love you less than those wives who smother their husbands with kisses, but because it is my nature; but I shall try to be more affectionate. I begin to see I was at fault;

Frank

kisses her, How I wish Jules had a wife with no greater fault. He releases her. Your seamstress is no doubt waiting.

Aline

Do't be late for lunch, dear. She leaves.

Frank

sinks into chair, Aline says we will think. I have done nothing else since I learned the truth; and I can find no way to prevent him from being his own enemy.

Curtain.



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Act II.

Scene: Parlor in Grace Garrison's little flat in Harlem.

Furniture, pictures and ornaments are covered, indicating warm weather. As curtain rises Joyce is seated in armchair near window; her waist is turned down at the neck, her sleeves are rolled up, her feet are crossed, resting on the seat of a chair. She is puffing a cigarette and is apparently in deep thought.

Joyce

knocking ashes from cigarette, I wonder if she'll do it. She puffs again. If she does, back to the café for mine. A pause. Well, for my part I really don't think I care. It's a darned rotten piece of business to have to lie all the time. I'm getting so I imagine I am telling a lie when I am telling the truth. I'm getting sick of it, and I think Grace and I are going to dissolve partnership; but that's the only drawback. She begins to smoke again; seems to be thinking. She turns suddenly and calls: Kate; Isay, Kate, where are you?

Door opens; enter Kate.

Kate

Did you call?

Joyce

No, an aeroplane just fell in Hoboken.

Kate

laughing. Sure, that's where me old man is now. I hope it hit him. They both laugh.

Joyce

You're legally married to him, ain't you?

Kate

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Kate

indignantly throwing up her head, Sure, I hope, yer do'nt insinuate I ~~am~~ was living with a man I was'nt married to?

Joyce

No, indeed not, Kate; you must have been married or you would'nt love each other so, and live in such harmony and peace.

Kate

Peace, did ye' say? Well, the devil a bit o' peace is was woth us from the very day I stopped ter take in washin'; but we was respectable jus the same. We was married according to the law.

Joyce

sarcastically, Yes, I do'nt doubt that in the least; but I think you could have done lots of fighting and swearing at each other without going to the trouble of getting married.

Kate

Sure, he was foine as lace, till we got married, bad luck to him.

Joyce

sneering. Oh, you were married alright. Now tell me, Kate, do you know where Miss Garrison went?

Kate

No, Miss, I do not; but I'm suspecting.

Joyce

puffs at her cigarette, as if trying to cover the fact that she is anxious to know. You are suspecting, are you?

Kate

Yes, and you'd like to know what I ~~am~~ suspecting. Well, I'm thinking there ain't going ter be any wedding bells for her and Mr Winslow.

Joyce

looks up quickly. What do you mean?

Kate

I mean Miss Garrison and Mr Frank Winslow will never get married.

Joyce

How do you know?

Kate

She told me ter look fer a job, because she wo'nt be able ter keep any help in the future.

Joyce

aside. Then she meant what she said. loud. Did she say anything about Mr Winslow?

Kate

Yes, she told me whenever he calls after to-day ter tell him Miss Garrison is out.

Joyce

It's all over.

Kate

looks out of window. Here she comes now, Miss Joe. Better throw away yer cigarette.

Joyce

throws cigarette out of window. Do'nt tell her what we've been talking about.

Kate

I wo'nt. She begins putting things in order. Joyce takes package of cigarettes from table and cuts it in her stocking.

Joyce

I wo'nt be sorry when I can smoke my cigarettes and leave them where I like without expecting a sermon.

Enter Grace.

Grace

as she remover hat pins. You are lucky to be indoors, Joe. The heat is simply awful. She turns to Kate. Any one been here, Kate?

Kate

No, Miss.

Grace

Any mail?

Kate

Faith, yes; I put it, let me see, where did I put it? I can't just think. I'll look fer it, Miss Garrison; I know I put it some place.

Grace

Yes, I suppose you did put it some place. She begins to sniff. I smell cigar smoke. Are you sure no one has been here?

Kate

No, Miss, no one was here; it ain't cigar smoke you smell, I think it is me meat burnin! She runs to the door. I'll find your letter, and I'll fetch it. She goes out.

Grace puts hat and gloves on table, and hand bag on the piano.

Joyce

Grace, that was'nt meat you smelt; it was a cigarette; I was smoking it.

Grace

I knew that before you told me; but I'm glad you told me the truth about it.

Joyce

Yes, and I am going to tell you some more truths; I've been lying to you, ever since I promised you to be decent.

Grace

surprised and shocked, You do'nt mean to tell me you deliberately---

Joyce

Yes, I did; but it's your own fault, Grace, you should'nt expect the impossible of me.

Grace

I expected nothing impossible of you. I asked you to give up the old life, and let me lead you as Mr Winslow was leading me.

Joyce

But if all the people in this world were alike you would'nt care to live in it. Your tastes differ from mine. You want to follow an angel I think it sport to follow the devil.

Grace

angry, Sport. Why, you have had nothing else since you were old enough to understand. It's time you were tired of it.

Joyce

A fish never tires of water, because he was born a fish. I was born and bred to be what I am. I am a spark of the flame; you can't expect to make marble of me. With you it is different. Very likely, you inherit your love of decency from your father.

Grace

Joe, I do'nt want to forget all you have been to me since we were children. I know too, that you followed me here from California, not to hunt relatives, but to be near me. I do'nt want you to think me ungrateful, but, Joe, unless you give up that life----a pause--- I hate to say the words.

Joyce

I'll say then for you: we'll have to dissolve partnership.

Grace

surprised, You said that with more ease than I expected.

Joyce

Well there's no use. I have been trying to make you see things my way, and you have been trying the same on me. We have always pulled the same way; but now, that Frank Winslow has come between us, now we pull in the opposite directions, so there's no other way.

Grace

Frank is no longer between us.

Joyce

surprised, You mean?

Grace

Yes, it's all over.

Joyce

And you've refused to accept your allowance from him?

Grace

Yes.

Joyce

How will you manage to live?

Grace

By going to work. You and I are going to work and support ourselves; we'll be very happy.

Joyce

looks at Grace in shocked manner, Grace, you've gone clean crazy, and you expect me to follow you. Work. What do either of us know about work? Say, perhaps you think of being a waitress in one of Childs' restaurants?

Grace

That would'nt be the worst that might happen.

Joyce

I would'nt be surprised to hear you say you want to get married and darn socks. Now, look here, girlie, you're a fool. You are madly in love with Winslow; yet you throw him over because he is married.

Grace

I throw him over because I love him.

Joyce

Now, that's a first class reason.

Grace

Yes, I love him, and therefore I make this sacrifice. I know I am a mill stone around his neck, and he will sink to the bottom. I must set him free; I will not let him fall into the very pit, he has lifted me from.

Joyce

Well, if you love him well enough to give him up to his wife, why do'nt you come with me to California, back to the boys and girls, who are aching to see us again?

Grace

You know it has always been my heart's desire to learn how to resist temptation. I have learned it now, thanks to the teachings of Frank Winslow.

Joyce

He didn't succeed in getting you to kick me out.

Grace

That was because I promised him you would give up the old life.

Joyce

Well, since the new life is going to send you to work, which means

getting up at six, mind what I say, get up at six. Gee, the very thought of it makes me creep; then at eight you put on your harness and start to work until twelve; then you get your bag oats slopped around your neck like a horse. When the bell rings you must quit eating; you start to work again, and you're watched by the foreman, I mean the driver, so your pace do'nt get too slow. You work till six then your harness comes off and you go to your stall, where you get your meal of oats again. You lie down on your straw bed to dream of the good times you are entitled to get; but you wake up and find you are in a dark lonely stall and must begin the new day as you did the day before. Excuse me for anything that comes near such a life as that.

Grace

Joe, you are trying to discourage me. You want to tempt me; but you are wasting time and talk. I know my head won't be one of roses without thorns; but at least I shall not expect the fate of a waxdoll in a man's hands, who fondles and kisses her, while youth and beauty lasts; and when that is gone, he throws her roughly to the ground. She breaks all to pieces. He never even stops to look at the fragments of the once beautiful doll; he turns to find a new one. And though the new one knows of the old one's fate she is glad to take her place.

Joyce

Well, I'll admit with us the end is pretty rotten; but at least life is life while it lasts. But with you there's no end, it's one continual struggle. The nearest I can compare your life to is the horse, not the doll. Now, which do you prefer, to be the horse or the doll?

Grace

For the horse there is a Society for the prevention of Cruelty to



Animals; but there is none to prevent men from being cruel to such women as I was and you are.

Joyce

He's put all that darn mush in your head, and I see it sticks there. Well, I suppose you've got no further use for me. Grace does not answer. No answer is an answer. She takes cigarettes from her stocking/ lights one, begins to puff. It's pretty tough to be sent away from a girl who's been your pal for twenty years; but it's his fault. A papse. Gee, whiss, how I'd enjoy a punch at his head. Grace is still sitting, a picture of sadness; Joe goes over to her. I know how you feel ~~in~~ about this, old girl, and I wo'nt make it any harder for you. I'll go right now. I promised to meet Big Ben at the café to-day. He'll help me find a place for a few days, until I can get enough money to take me back to California.

Grace

looks up. Please do'nt go back to the café?

Joyce

The café is to me what water is to a fish, Grace; I can't live without it. Do'nt you worry about me; there'll be lots of times when you will be thinking of the gay old times I'm having; while you'll be working for eight dollars a week, just enough for me for Repettie; She goes to the door/ Say, you'll let me come and see you once in a while?

Grace

No, not till you give up that life.

Joyce

Then we will never meet again, not even in the other world; for you will no doubt go to Heaven with the goodies. She opens door leading to her room and leaves. Grace sits down; a short pause.

Grace

Who would have dreamed that Joe and I would ever separate? But I did my best. Fate seems to have determined that I must be left alone, all alone; but I think I won't find it quite as easy to send Frank away as I did Joe. His words of yesterday still ring in my ears: "I will never forsake you in spite of the whole world." But he doesn't know that I would rather suffer death by torture than feel that I have ruined his future. I will ~~send~~ him even though I be compelled to make him believe that I have gone back to the old life. That and only that will place back where he belongs.

Kate

enters. Ther8s your letter, Miss. I found it in the ice-chest. I must have put it there when I wasn't thinking.

Grace

takes the letter and reads: You may call to-morrow between nine and ten; bring sufficient references with you.

Kate

Sure, that letter must have been a mistake. May be it's for me?

Grace

No its not a mistake its for me.

Kate

The Lord deliver us, what do you need a reference for.

Grace

Never mind that. What is Miss Joyce doing?

Kate  
She's gitting dressed, an' she told me ter pack her trunk. Is she going ter move?

Grace  
Yes.

Kate  
Now, that's very mean of her, leaving you like htis. I kin see yer feel like crying this minute.  
Grace throws the letter on the mantle. Enter Joe, hat on, gloves in hand and hand bag on arm.

Joyce  
opens bag, takes out coin and hands it to Kate. Here, Kate; be sure and pack my trunk nicely; do'nt wrinkle my pink dress.

Kate  
takes coin. I'm so sorry you're going, Miss Joe; and so is Miss Garrison. Must yer go?

Joyce  
Yes, Kate, I must go.

Grace  
takes her hat and gloves from piano and hands them to Kate. Here, put these things in my room.

Kate  
takes things and goes to door. Good bye, Miss Joe; good luck to you. She leaves.

Joyce  
I wanted to leave from my room so as to avoid the parting scene; but I couldn't. Grace, I must say Good-bye to you. She comes over to Grace and puts her hand on her shoulder. Do'nt worry for me, old girl. Just try to remember that no matter how little or how much I

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Will have, I'll be glad to share it with you. They shake hands heartily.

Joyce takes handkerchief and dries a tear. She seems to be ashamed of it, and quickly puts handkerchief back in the bag and begins to laugh.

Joyce  
Did you see me cry? Not a bit like me, is it? She pulls herself together. Good bye, it's all over. As she is about to go to door the telephone bell rings. She turns quickly. That may be for me. She picks up the receiver. Hello. Who? Oh, Miss Garrison. Here, Grace, some one for you.

Grace  
takes the receiver. Hello. Who? Mr Jules Winslow? She looks astonished. Well? You wish to call? Er, well, --undecided--, yes, you may call. Wait a moment. When may I expect you? Oh, in ten minutes; very well. Good bye. She hangs up receiver.

Joyce  
Grace, I think you are in for money. Now, do'nt be a fool; you were never meant for work. Good bye, old girl.

Grace  
Good bye, Joe. Remember if you are willing to go to work as I will do my doors will be open for you.

Joyce  
laughs. Do'nt be a fool, Grace; do'nt be a fool. She leaves.

Grace  
So, his brother is coming here? No doubt to threaten me or perhaps to buy him, so he can show him he was a fool; he was taken in. She draws a deep breath. Well, Mr Winslow, you are coming to set

a trap for me, and I'll walk in, but not for your sake, for his. I am going to set him free in spite of himself. He shall hear from his brother that I have made a fool of him; that I intend to go back where I come from. I'd give ten years of my life to be able to keep at least his respect, but I can't. She sobs. I can't. Oh, God, why is it that the fallen woman and the man who once were stripes can never atone for their sins? They are stamped with large, visible letters H.G., and are shunned as is the house that has the yellow smallpox sign nailed to the door. She sits down on piano stool, a picture of misery. A short pause. Well, there's no use; I can't change the world and its ways, and complaining will do me no good. She rises, trying to pull herself together. My heart beats so; I can scarcely---

Enter Jules Winslow, dressed in automobile Garb.

Grace Tries hard to appear Happy-go-lucky.

Grace

goes to meet him. Glad to see you Mr. Winslow. Won't you remove your coat?

Jules

Thank you, yes. Its beastly heat.

He hands her hat, takes off coat and hands it to her. She hangs them in hall facing room.

Grace

I was out for a little while, and was glad to get back. Sit down here. She places an arm chair by the window. This is the coolest spot in the house. It's Frank's favorite corner; but you won't mind that will you? She looks at him coquettishly.

Jules

No, he wipes his forehead with his handkerchief.

Jules

I would have postponed my visit here if I had known it was so hot.

Grace

points her finger at him laughingly. Oh, no, you wouldn't. You were too anxious to get here. Come now, admit it.

Jules

Well, yes, I was anxious to get here before Frank.

Grace

Now, Mr. Winslow, let's talk plainly. You no doubt came here in the hope of freeing your brother from me. Now why are you bent on doing this?

Jules

looks at her surprised, Why? Don't you know that he is a married man?

Grace

Yes. But don't you know that nine tenths of the men who are doing the same as he is doing now are married men?

Jules

perhaps; but I want my brother to be one of the remaining tenth.

Grace

Then what is to become of me? You don't think I'll be foolish enough to give up the crumbs before I have bread?

Jules looks at her steadily as she walks over to him and sits down on the arm of his chair, takes her fan, which is fastened to a string of beads around her neck, and begins fanning him slowly.

Grace

Now, if some nice bachelor or divorced man would come to take his place I would consider the matter, since you are so very considerate for your brother.

He looks up as if trying to understand her.

A short pause. She is sitting on the arm of the chair, her face turned from him, and it shows her true feelings.

Jules

Am I to understand you used Frank for his money only?

Grace

swinging her foot, yes.

Jules

Then if it is only money, that you are after how about my taking his place?

Grace

jumps down as if delighted, Nothing could suit me better. Money is money, no matter where it comes from, as long as we can spend it.

Jules is looking at her as if some compelling cause forced him to do so.

Grace

Say, you look dreadfully warm; I'm going to mix you a delicious drink. She goes to door and calls: Kate, bring in some water, ice, lemon and sugar? and brandy.

Kate

is heard answering, Allright, Miss.

Grace goes over to the table, take flower vaso and puts it on the mantle; then takes small tidy from table, folds it and puts it on chair, then turns to look at Jules, who is watching her eagerly.

Grace

You're looking at me as if I were in skin-tights and you were in the first row.

Jules

I'm looking at you, realizing, you are doing your best to live on the beauty of your face and figure, and wondering whether you realize

what will happen when that is gone.

Grace

Oh, pshaw; don't remind me of that now. I'm going to make the best of youth while it lasts; when it's gone--she snaps her fingers--

Oh, well, hang it all, it's lots of time before worry begins.

Jules

still looking at her, I thought you promised Frank to give up the old life and let him be your teacher?

Grace

begins to laugh, Say, you're old enough to know better than that; besides, suppose I did try to give up that life/ why, you would be the first one to try and prevent it.

Jules

No, not if you didn't select a married man for a teacher.

Grace

Well, suppose I selected a single man, another brother of yours; would you allow him to introduce me to your sister or mother?

Jules

If I were sure you were in earnest about it, yes.

Grace

But how could you know I was in earnest or not, if you didn't give me the chance to prove it?

Jules

looks at her earnestly, well, you're right there; but, you see, husbands or brothers can't take those chances with their wives or sisters.

Grace

Yes, and that's why women like me never try to go back to virtue; they know it's no use.

Jules



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Jules

But Frank did give you the chance; and you in turn made a fool of hi

Grace

forgetting herself for a moment, I did not. I did all-- Jules is looking at her steadily; she sees she has made a mistake-- she begins to laugh--in order to cover her mistake.-- I mean I did all I could to make him believe I was an earnest pupil.

Jules

He always was a fool.

Grace

Laughs. Yes. But greater men than he were fooled the same as he was. Say, were you never fooled? He looks down? I knew it. Very few of the stronger sex escape being fooled by the weaker.

Jules

I know that, and that is why I never will believe a fallen woman really wants the chance that Frank gave you.

Grace

You are wrong there, Mr Winslow. There are no rules without exception. There may be a case of a woman brought up in the slums; yet she would be good if she had the chance.

Enter Kate with tray, places same on table. She looks suspiciously at Jules, goes back to door, looks at him again, then turns and walks out. Grace begins preparing drinks; Jules is watching her.

Jules

Miss Garrison, I'm sorry you're not one of those women who would be good if she had the chance.

Grace

Laughs, as she squeezes the lemon. But, you see, I don't happen

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to be one of those. My style of living suits me to perfection; but I know a girl who would be glad to net the slightest chance to lead a decent life, but is narrow minded men like you who prevent her from being perhaps as good as any man's wife or sister. Jules looks at her in strange manner; Grace notices this. Say, let's drop the subject. I'm mixing a drink for you that my mother was noted for in our set.

Jules

looking at her as if compelled to by he knows not what, What do you mean by our set?

Grace

Oh, let me see; I can scarcely describe what I mean, the nearest I can get to it is the bunch, the gang, the push, oh, anything, that sounds like men and women who don't care.

Jules

And were you as bad as that?

Grace

That depends on what you call bad. She goes over and hands him glass. He watches her every move. You needn't be afraid; there's no drug in this. I'm not as bad as all that.

He drinks, then gives her the empty glass, still looking at her. She turns and sees he is still looking at her.

Grace

Why do you stare at me like that?

Jules

I don't know. I'm asking myself the same question. I feel as you had some hypnotic power over me.

Grace

Laughs. That's what Frank said the first time he came here; but I assure you I don't even know the meaning of it.

You need'nt worry; you are perfectly safe with me. You are welcome to go whenever you please as long as you leave me a reasonable check.

Jules

I'm not quite sure that I want to go.

Grace

Then you may stay as long as you please.

Jules

looks at her, then rises as if determined, My hat and gloves, please.

Grace

Certainly; just as soon as your check is ready.

He takes out check book, makes out check.

Jules

Hands her the check. Is that satisfactory?

Grace

looks at check, as if delighted, Yes, yes, Mr Winslow, I am well satisfied, and now you may rest assured your brother is free. Do'nt you want another drink?

Jules

No, that drink is Eve's apple to Adam.

Grace

I told you all I want is money.

She fills glass and hands it to him; he takes it and stands looking at her, glass in hand. He looks around the room as if trying to understand the meaning of his feelings. He turns suddenly to look at her, spilling contents of glass, and puts glass on tray.

Jules

grabs table for support, looks at her wildly, My God, I am trapped for the second time. Do'nt, do'nt try to tell me you didn't do it, you did, you did. There, he is looking wildly at her, you are doing

it now. You are looking at me with a look that says: you're mine, you are mine. In a wild rage. But you won't succeed, do you hear me; you will never succeed. He takes hat and gloves and goes to door.

Grace

You have forgotten your check book. She hands it to him; he takes it looks at her and throws hat and gloves on chair near door.

Jules

There's no use, there's no use. You have won out. I am yours to do with as you please, to fool and to torture to your heart's content. He stands looking at her, eyes ablaze.

Grace

Mr Winslow, you are mistaken; I have used no influence over you. On the contrary, my respect for you until this moment was more than I can account for. You came to buy your brother from me. The bargain was money and was closed as such.

Jules

in anger, then you want my money, and another man's caresses?

Sell rings; Jules startles.

Grace

aside, That's Frank. Now's my chance.

Jules

Do you expect a visitor?

Grace

No, my maid expects her beau. She goes over to him and puts her hand on his shoulder. Now, come, dear, do'nt lose your temper. I was only testing you; I wanted to see how much you care for me.

He crosses into his arms. He heaves a sigh of relief, and clasps her tightly in his arms and kisses her lips passionately.

Grace

Grace

as he is still holding her in his arms. You have'nt forgotten the art of kissing.

He kisses her again. Door opens. Enter Frank. His look is as mild as a tiger's. Grace leaves Jules arms, tries to avoid looking at Frank.

Frank

So, this is why you were so considerate for Aline.

Jules

Yes. You are a married man and the father of two children; I'm free.

Frank

his anger knows no bounds, but your freedom does not entitle you to take advantage of this poor girl, who has never been taught to resist men like you.

Jules

Now, look here, Frank. You are an ass, and I am going to prove it to you.. Grace, tell my brother that he has been nothing but a convenient provider of money to you.

Grace realises that the time has come when all her strength and willpower is to be put to the test. She is determined to master the situation at any cost. She is equal to the task.

Grace

Look here, Frank; You are nothing but a grown up kid or you would have seen through my game before this. Your brother speaks the truth. I was in need of money; you came and offered it to me for just a promise to be a good girl. Well it's easy enough to promise, especially to an easy mark like you.

Frank

astonished. And is the way you repaid all the sacrifices I have made for you?

Grace

anxious, sacrifice indeed. I've been living like a beggar since I know you. I owe my dressmaker and milliner more money than you possess. I tell you I was getting mighty tired of it; but I could'nt shake till I had some one to take your place.

Frank stares at her as if he could'nt believe his own ears.

Jules

You see, Frank, You have been fooled.

Frank

goes over to Grace. Grace, there is something wrong here. I know you better than you think I do. You have been tricked into what you are doing now. Perhaps my brother has some secret influence over you; but rest assured I am fully convinced your heart does not mean what your lips have just told me. Come, now, tell me the truth. I'll stand by you in spite of the objections of the whole world.

Jules

aside, He is madly in love with her.

Grace

using all her willpower to keep up her part, Frank, once and for all I am done with you. I can't live in a stuffy little flat like this any longer; besides, no one in the neighborhood will give me any more charlie account. I owe them too much now. Your brother is rich and a bachelor; that just suits me. She turns to go in to her room.

Frank

Wait a moment, Grace; I want just one more word with you?

Grace turns. She is trying hard to keep up under the strain; but is getting weaker every moment.

Grace

Well, hurry with what you want to say. My head aches; I want to lie down.

Frank

Your head does not ache half as much as your heart. I see it all now. You are playing a game. You told me yesterday you will free me in spite of myself, and that's what you are trying to do. Now, own up to it; I can read it in your eyes.

Grace

laughs a hard loud laugh. Well, that's the limit. One would think I must play a game to throw over a fool like you. She laughs again. It's just simply this and only this: you were allright until a little chance came along; now you're all wrong. She laughs hysterically. Go home, little simpleton, to your wife and babies. They want you. She laughs again. While laughing she turns knob of door, for she feels her strength leaving her; she wants to get away from it all. Frank takes her by the arm; she tries to free herself. She wants to go in, but he holds her firmly by the wrist.

Frank

The game didn't work, Grace? The sound of that laugh and the look in your eyes betrayed you.

Grace

whispers. Let me go; my head aches, I am not well. Let me go.

Frank still holds her hand; she is trembling in every limb.

Frank

to Jules. Look at her and tell me she is not playing a part.

Jules

Ask her to show you the check she took from me just before you came in.

Frank

to Grace. Did you?

Grace

Takes check from bosom shows it to him; as calmly as possible.

You may look but you mustn't touch.

Frank is again baffled. Grace opens the door.

Frank

Grace, I have something to say to my brother, that I don't want you to hear. Will you please go in to your neighbors for a little while?

Jules

We can talk the matter over to-night at home.

Frank

No, we will talk here and now. Grace, will you go?

Grace

Yes; but mind, don't quarrel on my account; it isn't really worth while. She leaves. Frank opens door again to make sure she is gone, then closes door again.

Frank

Jules, I have tried with all my power to save you the pain I must now give you; but you insisted on being your own enemy.

Jules

What in thunder are you driving at? Frank looks at him, then puts his hand in his pocket takes out a small knife and walks over to the mantle, over which hangs a portrait covered with cheese-cloth. He steps up on a chair, cuts the cover in the centre so the cloth falls to either side, and the face of a beautiful woman is seen. As Jules sees the portrait he rushes toward it in wild surprise.

Jules

Claire/ How came that picture here.

Frank looks at him. Jules stands there as if trying to solve a great mystery/ He is beginning to suspect, but is not sure.

Frank

You are still in doubt. He goes over to a small covered cabinet.



cover aside and takes out a book. He hands it to Jules.

Jules

looks at it. A Fairy Tale book.

Frank

Open it and look at the first page. You'll recognise your own writing.

Jules looks first at book then at Frank then at book again. He opens the book and his eyes glance over the words written in it. The book falls from his hands; his eyes open wide, his hands are outstretched as he hisses

Jules

My God, my child.

He covers his face with his hands while his strong frame trembles with emotion. A short pause. Jules

rushes over to Frank in wild frenzy, cries out. You, you knew this for some time, and you let me---. Oh, great God, He acts like a man suddenly gone mad. You knew, you knew she was my little girl. Why did'nt you tell me?

Frank

You forget your own words. If I had a child or sister like her I'd strangle her to death.

Jules

Yes, I did say that; but do'nt you know it is easy to say most anything of another man's child. But when your own flesh and blood is concerned, ah, it is vastly different. And then, I was trying to save you, fighting to save you from ruin. How could I dream I was paying such a price? My Topsey, my own little girl. I understand now why I could not resist to take her in my arms. Great God, I had my child

close to my heart and thought---. Oh, he is frantic with grief, and humiliation. It's terrible, it's terrible.

Frank is looking at him in great alarm. Jules looks at Frank, his eyes glowing, his body trembling, his misery depicted in his face. His whole body is giving in to the state of his feelings.

Jules

Well, why do you stand there staring at me as I were a maniac. Why do you not say something, why do'nt you suggest something? Do'nt you see I need advice? Something must be done; something must be done.

Frank

Nothing can be done till you calm yourself.

Jules

In great anger. Calm myself, you say. How easy that sounds; but have you stopped to think how I suffered when her mother stole her from me. My little Topsey. She was all I had to live for. I would have welcomed death after I lost her; but the hope of some day finding her kept me living and hoping and waiting. And now, after twenty years I have found her; but what, first the mistress of her uncle, then her own father---. A terrible look of anguish comes into his face. A short pause. Then as if determined he puts his hand in his back pocket and pulls out a revolver. Frank rushes over to him. They struggle, but Frank gets possession of the revolver.

Jules

sinks into a chair. So, you think I can live and perhaps be merry after what has happened?

Frank

Yes, if you collect your thoughts you will see that I knew she was my niece. I knew it from the moment I entered this house, for it was winter then and the portrait was uncovered.

Jules

But before you came here?

Frank

I will admit that my intentions on my first visit here were not to boast of; but as soon as I saw that-- he points to picture-- I began to question her. She told me how her mother took her to California and changed her name. She showed me the Fairy Tale book she prized so much; then I told her I came for no other purpose but to give her the chance to respectable the same as my wife or my sister.

Jules

sadly. And she deceived you. But, Frank, she isn't all to blame; she didn't have the chance in life that your wife or sister had. I understand now; she was brought up in the slums in California. That I never dreamed of. The only decent thing there ever was about Claire was her great love for her child. I thought she would give her a decent bringing up; but she didn't, she didn't.

Frank

Claire couldn't teach her child what she didn't understand herself; but nothing can kill Nature. She was brought up in the slums, but she inherited the love of respect from her father. I know that her greatest wish was to be allowed to mingle with respectable people women, and I am sure she has been all that a good woman should be until to-day. The temptation was greater than a girl with such a bringing up could resist.

Jules

shakes his head sadly. My poor little girl. Think, think, Frank, how she suffered for her mother's sins.

Frank

Yes, and now, when you have found her you can be her shield against further storms, you try to end your life and leave her to the winds

again.

Jules

You say I have found her. Suppose she were to open that door now, would you expect me to tell her I am her father, after what happened here a little while ago?

Frank

No, not just now; but I can come to-morrow and explain to her. There's no doubt she will think the same about this matter as you do; but she is a clever girl, and when she hears you are willing to give her the place in your heart and home that she is entitled to, rest assured she will try with all her might to deserve it.

Jules

looks up sadly. I can't wait till to-morrow. All the twenty years didn't seem as long as these twenty-four hours will. I know now she is mine. I can hear the sound of her little baby voice when she used to call out: Ready, Daddy, ready. And then I would make believe I could not catch her, and she would laugh so heartily. The sound of that laugh is ringing in my ears now. Frank, you will never know the feeling there is here now-- he puts his hand over his heart-- There is only a wall between my child and me. I'd give half of my life to be able to take her in my arms.

Door opens slowly. Enter Grace pale and haggard looking. As Jules sees her the expression in his face is that of a parent whose heart is yearning to embrace his child. He watches her every move and listens to every word.

Grace

I could not remain at my neighbor's any longer. She was getting ready to go and meet her husband at twelve o'clock, and I could not detain her. I hope you are through arguing. I am going to take a nap. She crosses the room, while Jules has to restrain himself from taking

her in his arms. His eyes follow her as if he would devour her.

Grace

as she gets to door, to Frank. I do'n't suppose we will meet again, so I will say goodbye.

Frank

I am going to call to-morrow; I've got a great surprise for you.

Grace

firmly, I will not be home to-morrow.

Frank

Grace, something has happened which prevents me from telling you now what you will hear to-morrow; but I promise to tell you something the that will change your whole future.

Grace

tries hard to smile. So, you have been bargaining about my future?

Well, I am a woman and I am curious. You may come to-morrow; but that ends your visits here. She leaves.

Jules

rushes over to Frank. Frank, she is ill. Did'n't you see that? She may need a doctor, and she's all alone here.

Frank

I'll call Kate; you may rely on her. He opens door and calls: Kate. He gets no answer. She must be in the kitchen, which is the last room in the flat. I will see her and tell her to keep an eye on her mistress to-day.

Jules

Tell her to come to me. I want to speak to her myself.

Frank goes in. Jules goes over to the door leading to Grace's room: he stands looking at it as if trying to look through it. He heaves a deep sigh.

Jules

Jules Topsey

Topsey, my little topsey.

At these words the door opens and Grace appears. Jules starts.

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Grace

I was just coming out to ask you to send my nurse to me, when I thought I heard someone say "Topsey, my Topsey."

Jules

Hesitatingly, No, no, you must have been mistaken.

Grace

I am almost sure I heard it. It was the pet name my father used to call me. Jules is ready to collapse. I must have been mistaken? My nerves are getting the best of me. Please send my maid to me on your way out. She leaves, closing door behind her.

Jules stands looking at door again. Enter Frank And Kate.

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Frank

Kate, this gentleman is my brother, and of course he is a friend to your mistress the same as I am.

Jules

Kate, your mistress is not well. I want you to promise that if she is no better before this evening you will call a doctor. Send the bill to us.

Kate

As Frank takes hat and coat from rack, You kin rely on me, sir; I'll take good care of her, for I'm sorry for her. She's anything but a happy girl.

Frank hands Jules the hat and helps him on with the coat. They move toward the door, but Jules eyes are fastened on door through which Grace has left.

Frank

as he nears door, Kate tell Miss Garrison I will see her in the morning  
Jules looks at Grace's Door till they leave.

Kate

as she puts things in order. There's something wrong here, too bad I was  
too enough to bother about the cooking; I might have heard what they  
were talking about. So, that's his brother, is it? I wonder why he ne-  
ver showed up before. She picks up tray. Well the next time he comes  
Kate'll know what he's comin' fer. She walks in with tray, returns in  
a moment. I just can't get this business out o' me head. I'd give half  
of my wages to know what's the what. She stands thinking. Enter  
Grace. Looking as if misery had selected her for its leading victim.  
She sits down in chair near table.

Kate

I thought you were going to try to sleep.

Grace

I did try, but I can't.

Kate

Sure you can't with all yer clothes on. Why don't you git undressed  
and lie down comfortably?

I can't

Grace

I don't want to lie down.

Kate seeing book

on floor, Sure it's so hot your head'll ache worse if you walk in the  
sun. She picks up book puts it on table unnoticed by Grace.

Grace

I am going to do a little shopping. The selecting of material

the people and the noise may help carry off the blues I've got.

Kate

goes over to her/ puts hand caressingly on her shoulder. Miss  
Garrison, I know you have got the blues, and you got them bad; but  
I do'n't know the reason. Now, take an old woman's advice: when Mr  
Winslow comes to-morrow tell him all yer troubles and do'n't hide any-  
thing from him. He's your friend, every inch of him, God bless him.

Grace

looks out blankly before her, sighs and says: Kate, I'D like you to  
wash and iron my linen suit; I think I will need it to-morrow.

Kate

I will, miss; I'll do it right away, for it's good drying to-day,  
and I'll be able to iron it the first thing in the morning. She goes  
to door. Cheer up, there's no use crying when you kin laugh instead.  
She goes in.

Grace

still sitting as if happiness and herself were on very bad terms, I  
wonder what the surprise can be? I'D give a lot to know it now. A  
short pause. They must have quarreled bitterly, and the old man  
looks as if he got the worst end of it. Oh, well there's no use  
guessing; a few hours will tell it all. She rises, takes off her  
belt and throws it on the table. She notices book, surprised. How  
did my Fairy Tale book get out? She picks it up and looks at it,  
then looks toward the cabinet and sees the cover is drawn aside. She  
stands, book in hand, trying to think. She looks around the room in a  
questioning manner till her eyes meet the picture of her mother. She  
looks at it as if a sudden shock had come to her. A short pause, as  
she gazes wildly at the portrait. She then walks to door leading to  
kitchen and calls: Kate, Kate, come here.  
Kate comes to the door.

Grace

Kate, did you cut the cover of that picture?

Kate

surprised. You don't think I'm crazy do you?

Grace

Do you know who done it?

Kate

No, Miss, I do not.

Grace

Do you know if the cover was on before Mr Winslow came in?

Kate

Yes, it was on allright, for I was dusting this morning; and I would have noticed it if it was done before I dusted.

Grace

all a-tremble. And this book, Kate; where was this book?

Kate

looks at the book. Sure, I do'nt know. I found the book on the floor and put it on the table. I thought you had it; I never saw it before.

Grace

Allright, Kate, you may go. Kate stands looking at her thoroughly mystified. I said you may go, Kate. Kate goes in. A short pause.

She looks at portrait again. It must have been Frank who cut the cover to show it to his brother. But what for? A short pause. Why should my mother's picture interest him? She looks at the book/

He must have shown him this book too. A pause. Perhaps he was trying to show him I was not as bad as I pretended to be. A pause. But why did he show him that picture. He would not show him the likeness of a

Gradually the truth begins to dawn upon her. Her eyes open wide, her whole attitude shows plainly the awful horror this new knowledge brings to her. She stands in this position a few seconds then cries out in agony; I was not mistaken. He did say the words; Topsy, my Topsy. He is my father. I see it all now. He is my own father. Oh, God. She covers her face with her hands. A few moments elapse, while nothing is heard but her sobbing. So, that is why Frank befriended me. He knew the truth. That picture told it to him. She stands looking at the picture, a hard, wild look in her eyes; her whole body is trembling with emotion. You, you are the cause of it all. You gave me life, but what have you done with it? You've crushed and crumbled it to pieces. Oh, God, why do you bless such women with children, and then have them grow up to curse their mother's memory, the same as I do now. A key is heard in the door; door opens. Enter Joyce. Grace looks at her surprised.

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Joyce

Do'nt get frightened, Grace. I did'nt come to stay; I forgot I put my rings on the window in the bath room, and I was afraid Kate would throw them off while dusting. I'll just go in and get them, and then I'll be off for good. She goes to door.

Grace

Joe, I have got a big surprise for you.

Joyce

in glad tone. You have? Well, out with it; I just love surprises.

Grace

I've found my father.

Joyce is too surprised to speak. She startles back, looking at Grace as if she had gone mad.

Grace



Grace

You can't believe it, but it's true just the same.

Joyce

Who is he? Do I know him?

Grace

Yes; he is Mr Jules Winslow.

Joyce

still more surprised. Frank's brother?

Grace

Yes.

Joyce

in joyous tone. Then, girlie, you're made, you're made for life.

You've got what you want now. You are the daughter of one of the most respected men in town. You can be the model of virtue you always wanted to be without having to work like a horse. She goes over to her and puts her arms around Grace's neck. It's a cinch, girlie; it's a cinch. She looks up at Grace and sees she is far from happy. Why, what's the matter? You look as if you had found him dead with nothing but debts to keep his memory alive.

Grace

It's worse than that, Joe. He tried to save his brother from what he thought meant his ruin; so he came to me to buy his brother from me. I sold him, not because I wanted his money, but because I wanted Fran to be free. I did not know who he was till it was too late.

Joyce

Too late? What the dickens do you call too late? It's never too late or too early for a father to find his own child. When once he's found her, he's got her; that's all.

Grace

But don't you understand? He believes I am really as bad as I preten-

ded to be.

Joyce

Oh, Hell; you do 'nt know what you are talking about. If once he knows you are his girl it wo'nt make any difference to him whether you are as good as an angel or as bad as the devil. Blood is blood every time.

Grace

Not in the class my father comes from. Respect reigns supreme, even over blood.

Joyce

You just wait and see when he finds out you are his girl.

Grace

He knows it now.

Joyce

surprised. What? You mean to tell me he knows, and he refuses?

Grace

Yes, he knew it before he left this house. You see the picture? Frank must have shown it to him; and there's the book. He showed that to him, and then, when I entered the room, I heard him say: Topsey, my little Topsey.

Joyce

That shows he was glad.

Grace

Topsey was a little girl when he knew her. Now all he had to do was to open that door and say: Topsey, come to me. A deep sigh. But he did 'nt. He denied he said the words for he was ashamed of them; so he said: You must be mistaken; no one said those words. He left saying nothing but that Frank will come to-morrow to give me a big surprise. That, no doubt, means money, to get rid of me.

Joyce

Well, if that is the meaning of a respectable father I'm glad I never expect to find one. Well that beats all I ever heard. A father finds his own child after twenty years and refuses to own her just because— Well, say, He knows as well as I do you could 'nt be any better than the woman he married. It was his fault she was your mother.

Grace

But it was not his fault that she stole me from him.

Joyce

Well, it's not your fault. Now, look here; the best thing to do is to forget the whole damned business. If your own father refuses to recognize you who do you expect will stick to you among that gang of stiffies? You're alone now, all alone; no one in the respectable set cares whether you live or die. Come back to us, girlie; come back into the light. You are in a deep, dark hole here, and no one is willing to help you out.

Grace

desperate, goes over to the door and calls: Kate, bring in some brandy and two glasses.

Joyce

looks at her happy and surprised. You're a brick, old girl. Just you wait and see. In a week all the color you've lost will come back into your face. You'll laugh and you'll sing, and you will be your dear old self again.

Grace

Yes. I'd give ten dollars now for some loud excitement. I wouldn't care what it is, even if it were a fire and we had to jump out of the window. Hysterically. Go on, Joe; do something, make some noise, any sort of noise will do.

Enter Kate with tray; places same on the table.

Grace

You may go out, Kate. I am going to a picnic, and I won't be home till late.

Kate

That's right, Miss Garrison; go and enjoy yourself. Perhaps you'll be yourself again. She goes out.

Joyce

You bet you'll be yourself again. You will, you will come to the picnic to-night?

Grace

Yes, I will, desperately. I'll do anything that's fun, real, live fun. ~~Just~~ A hurdy-gurdy is heard. She runs to window, throws out some change and calls: Play, play all the tunes you've got.

Joyce is laughing as she pours the whiskey into glasses. Grace goes in for a moment and comes out putting on her hat.

Grace

We'll go and do a little shopping. I need some things for the picnic. The hurdy-gurdy is playing all the time.

Joyce

Let's take a drink before we go. It will be a bracer. She hands Grace the glass. Oh, wait a moment. I am going to repeat the toast Ted gave in your honor one night last week. She raises glass, and slowly and distinctly says: Here's to Grace, the dear, old gal, that used to dance and giggle. To Hell with the bloke that's doing his best to make her dance to his fiddle.

Grace stands looking at her, her whole manner changing. She places glass back on the tray.

Grace

I have changed my mind, Joe; I remain here. Go, please, go at once. Joyce looks at Grace, then at her glass. She drinks its contents.

Joyce

looks at Grace again. You're incurable; I won't waste another word on you. She goes to the door. Good-bye, Grace; take my advice and have your brains examined.

Grace is removing hatpins as Joyce leaves.

Grace

walks slowly to the door and calls: Kate. Kate comes to the door. Kate, I want you to help me pack my trunk. I'm going to Canada tonight. Will you come with me?

Kate

Sure, I'd go to the end o' the world with you. But you promised to see Mr Winslow in the morning.

Grace

I don't want to see Mr Winslow any more. For that reason we go to-night. Will you come with me?

Kate

Sure.

Grace

Then start to pack at once.

Kate

Allright, miss. Now, don't you git excited; you look all worn out. Leave all the work to me, and you lie down a little while. She leaves. Grace picks up Fairy Tale book; looks at it sadly; opens cover.

Grace

reads: From Papa to Topsy. She presses book closely to her breast, clasping her two arms over it. Her head drops. A sob.

Curtain.

Act III.

Time: Three years have elapsed.

Jules Winslow's room in his brother's house, situated in the heart of the Catskill Mountains. The room is beautifully furnished, everything imaginable for his comfort is to be seen. Large, French windows lead to a large porch; when windows are open a fine view is had of the surrounding country.

Miss Richter is seated at a small desk, apparently in deep thought.

Enter Mrs Winslow, a bunch of fresh flowers in hand, which she puts in vase on table.

Mrs W

looks at Miss Richter. She is no doubt writing for some one to meet her at the train.

Miss R

looks up suddenly. Did you speak to me, Mrs Winslow?

Mrs W

No; but I was thinking it's time to get things ready for Mr Winslow. They will soon be back from their ride.

Miss R

Why, I thought the new nurse would be here by this time.

Mrs W

But she's not here; Dr Bentley has gone to bring her. Perhaps they missed the eight fourteen train.

Miss R

Well, I suppose I will have to force my unpleasant presence upon Mr Winslow for another day.

Mrs W

Now, my dear Miss Richter; you mustn't see things worse than they really are. You are the third nurse Mr Winslow has had, and you must take into consideration that his poor mind is unbalanced. He can not

be reasoned with the same as you and I.

Miss R

sarcastically. No one knows that better than I do. He has tried my patience so severely I don't think I will be fit to take another case for a month.

Mrs W

You needn't worry about that, Miss Richter. We will see to it that you lose nothing by having nursed Mr Winslow. Now, I wish you would have things ready when he returns. She leaves.

Miss R. continues writing for a few moments.

Miss R

seals her letter. That much is done. She rises. She'll see to it that I lose nothing by nursing Mr Winslow? Well, I guess she will; the money paid for nursing him is well earned. No more crazy patients for me.

She goes over to small medicine chest, mixes some medicine in a medicine glass and puts it back in chest. She then gets his lounging robe throws it over back of chair, and places his slippers in front of chair. She then goes over to mantle and picks up a picture in a small frame.

Miss R

The cause of all his trouble. What beautiful eyes she has. She can't be more than five years old.

Enter Dr Bentley and nurse. Miss R. hurriedly puts picture back and turns to meet the doctor.

Dr B

Has the patient gone out?

Miss R

Yes, sir, for a drive with his brother.

Dr B

Dr B

Good. The weather is fine this morning. Miss Garrison, this is Miss Richter, the patient's former nurse. She has done all in her power for him but has been rather unsuccessful; so don't be disappointed if you don't succeed in winning him over. You must be well prepared that your task is not an easy one, and should he insist, your name is Topsey, why, just answer to that name.

At the word Topsey Grace starts. Her eyes open wide; she has all she can do to manage the situation.

Grace

in low, excited tone, I--I can't stay here, doctor; I must go.

Dr B

Why, what's wrong? You told me you are not afraid of such cases.

Grace

No, I am not afraid. She looks about her in a nervous manner. But--but I'd rather not take the case.

Dr B

Do you realize you have put me to a great inconvenience? I spent all these hours to bring you, and now you refuse to stay. Oh, come now, take off your hat and Miss Richter will give you all the details of the case. It's an interesting one, I assure you.

Grace stands a moment in doubt what to do.

Grace

looks at Dr B. Does the patient recognize every one around him?

Dr B

Well, at times he does; then again there are times when every woman he sees is Topsey. You see that was the pet name of his little girl; but she's a woman now.

Grace

faltering. Then she must be the cause of his trouble?



Dr B

Yes. Miss Richter will give you all further information. I am due at a patient's house and must hurry. He goes to the door. Miss Garrison I expect to find you here when I return. He leaves.

Grace

to Miss R., Would you mind telling me all about the case. I am getting interested.

Miss R

So was I when I first came here. He used to call me Topsey; but after a while he began to complain that my eyes were not blue and my hair was not golden like Topsey's, and then he no further use for me. But you do stand some chance; you happen to have blue eyes and golden hair perhaps you'll take his fancy.

Grace

eagerly. Am I to understand he loves this Topsey, this girl of his?

Miss R

Why yes; it was the loss of her that drove him to insanity. Grace looks at her bewildered--You are getting quite interested in the case, aren't you?

Grace

Yes; how long is this girl dead?

Miss R

She is not dead. She was stolen by her mother when she was a little girl, and for twenty years he lost all trace of her; then he found her, and for some reason that I don't know he did not tell her at once she was his daughter, but left word he would call the next day; and when he called she had gone and left no trace of her whereabouts.

Grace

May I ask where you got this information?

Miss R

From Mr. Winslow's maid.

Grace

trying to avoid Miss R's gaze. Does the doctor give any hope for a cure?

Miss R

Well, he is not confident. He claims that he once had a patient who was told his son had been killed in a railway accident. The shock unbalanced his mind. The son, not knowing ~~that~~ the news his father had received, came home, and the sudden appearance of the son was a complete cure.

Grace

heaves a sigh of relief. Will you show me to my room, please?

Miss R

Come this way. They both walk in.

Enter maid, places letter on table, then leaves. Enter Miss Richter.

Miss R

There is something wrong about her. She had a past, that I am sure of. She goes to the window. There they are now.

She begins putting things in order.

Enter Frank and Jules. Jules' hair is completely gray, his complexion very pale, his eyes wide open and blank looking. Miss R helps him off with his coat.

Jules

crossly. Don't bother about me; Frank will help me.

Frank goes over and helps him off with coat and helps him on with robe.

Jules

I thought we were going to have a new nurse?



Frank

Yes, but she hasn't arrived yet.

Miss R

Yes she has. She's gone to put her uniform on; she will be down in a few minutes.

Jules

Well I'm glad, that is, if she hasn't got dark hair and black eyes like a creole.

Frank

Dr. Bentley told me he would see to it that ~~she~~ a blond woman came this time;

Miss R

She is fair.

Jules

Sighs. So was my Topsey. Say--he looks at Miss Richter--your going to town ain't you?

Miss R

Yes.

Jules

You'll be likely to meet her on the train; if you do send her to me at once.

Miss R

Yes.

Jules

Tell her she was a disobedient child to run away from her father and not say where she was going.

Enter Aline.

Aline

goes over to Jules? The drive has done you much good. You look much better than you have for a long time.

Jules

Of course I do. Miss Richter has just promised to tell Topsey I'm waiting for her; and then she'll come.

Miss R

Goes to door. The new nurse will be down here in a moment. She leaves.

Aline

I didn't know she had arrived.

Frank

I'm sorry for Miss Richter. She tried so hard to please.

Jules

She never could please me with that Indian complexion of hers; and when she used to tell me she was my little Topsey I felt that some fine morning she would die with her boots on.

Aline is motioning Frank not to argue.

Aline

goes over to Jules. You are quite right, dear. She pats him gently on the shoulder, but now it's over. Miss Richter won't annoy you any more. We have a new nurse, and Miss Richter says she's blond.

Jules

What Miss Richter says don't go; she's color blind, since she thinks she's Baby Topsey.

Jules is now standing by the mantle. He takes a little picture and looks at it, his whole heart in his eyes.

Grace opens door on opposite side of room and comes in dressed in her nurse's uniform, unnoticed by Jules. As Frank sees her his astonishment is so great he startles back, as if he couldn't believe his own eyes. He puts his finger to his lips, motioning to her not to speak. Aline is silently watching Jules, as he lingers over the little picture. Frank walks over to Aline, taps her on the shoulder.

Frank

whispers to her, Turn around, but don't cry out.

Aline is almost frightened; she turns round and is ready to cry out, but Frank puts his hand over her mouth. They all stand in this position: for a moment: Jules looking at the picture, Grace in the doorway, and Frank and his wife in bewildered surprise looking at Grace. Then the silence is broken.

Aline

whispers to Frank, Dr Bentley's cure, the shock.

Frank nods. Aline goes over to Grace takes her hand, leads her into the room and kisses her.

Aline

to Grace, Try to bring him back.

Grace

whispers, I'll try.

Jules

turns, still looking at the picture, I can't deny it; her mouth and chin, just like her mother's.

Grace stands trembling like a leaf, while Frank and Aline are watching them breathlessly.

Jules

continues, But her eyes---a slight smile crosses his face---, her eyes are like her father's. Can't you see that?

He takes a few steps, and comes face to face with Grace.

Frank and Aline are now two pictures of hope and anxiety.

Grace throws back her head in masterly manner, and as Jules sees her he stops short and stands looking at her, not moving a muscle.

His features twitch, his eyes brighten and open wide.

Jules

(Turns to Frank and Aline) The--the new nurse?

Aline

I hope you'll like her.

Jules

( beckons to Grace to come over. She walks slowly over to him. He looks at her hair, then gazes into her eyes; slowly takes her hand, speaks in soft tone) Your blue eyes and golden hair will make me feel that Topsey's around me.--You won't leave me, will you?

Grace

No, of course not.

Jules

(Keeps looking at her) You look so much like her.--(He drops her hand)--Wait a minute. I'm going to let you see for yourself.--

(He goes to mantle, takes picture, goes back to Grace)--Look at my baby! Does'nt she---(He stops short, looks at Grace again)--

I saw you once before, but--but where, where?--(He looks at Aline and Frank, then again at Grace.---Grace removes her nurse's cap.--- Silence a moment,--then he cries out) My Topsey, my baby! You are! You are!-- (Grace throws her arms around him as he sobs)---My Topsey My little girl!--

(Frank lowers his head.--Aline dries a tear.)

Curtain.